



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## Taking care of your kids; How to get the “hometown” feeling

By: Lt. Col. Julie Tullberg, Evans Army Community Hospital pediatrician

Where is your hometown? We might be part of a larger military family, with many moves across years of service, but most people know how important it is to have that hometown feeling. In your hometown, you take your car to the same repair shop because the people who work there know your car. You trust they will do what needs to be done and not scam you. We favor the hometown grocery store because we know where the butter and milk aisles are located without having to search all the way around the store. So, why would we not want to take our kids to the same medical provider when they are sick or for their annual sports physical? Evans Army Community Hospital wants to provide health care with that hometown feeling to you and your child.

Evans Army Community Hospital is implementing a new way of delivering health care to our patients, the Patient Centered Medical Home. It starts with a consistent small team of providers and nursing staff who get to know your child and your family. Your child is assigned to one Primary Care Manager who is on a team of 3-5 providers along with their nursing staff. If your child's doctor is available, your child will be scheduled with that person. However, because of vacations, call schedules, and additional duties, your child's provider might not always be personally available. If that happens, someone on the same team will see your child and the nursing staff for the team remains consistent. It means a small number of people get to know your child much better.

Not only is it comforting to children and their parents to see health care providers whom they know and like, but the PCMH model improves the health care delivered to your child and provides a much safer environment for them. For example, if your child has problems with asthma and your child's PCM knows the early warning signs of a flare, the caregiver might be able to treat your child earlier or know what usually works for your child. It prevents a much more serious asthma problem than if you'd gone to someone who has never seen your child. It doesn't mean that a visit to the ER or Urgent Care is never appropriate. There are certainly some conditions that require medical care right away. However, after that visit, your child should follow up with their regular PCM to make sure he or she is getting better.

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Another benefit to seeing your child's PCM is continuity. Who wants to repeat the same list of ailments, surgeries, and medications that your child has been on over and over? It's too easy to forget something. Your child's regular doctor will know his or her history and be able to take care of any additional laboratory tests and medication refills during a well child visit. That saves parents another appointment trip and ensures your child gets the care they need, even if they are not there for that complaint.

As part of the PCMH, your child's PCM and nursing staff will also keep track of such important things as well baby visits. Your child should have at least six well baby visits with immunizations before he or she reaches 15 months old. Your child's team will track whether your baby is behind on any of these and send reminders to make sure your baby is the healthiest he or she can be.

Your Pediatric and Family Medicine Clinics at Evans Army Community Hospital are building a hometown feeling around the care of your child. Since your child is so much more important to you than your car or your grocery visit, you can see the importance of your child seeing his or her PCM when possible. Not only will you feel more comfortable with someone you know, but your child's health care will be better. Partner with us and ensure you ask for appointments with your team! As we continue with the PCMH model of health care, we are sure you will see the benefits to your family.